Government certain measures to help these weaker sections of the society; and

(c) what measures the Government of India have taken in this matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) The economic situation of handloom and powerloom weavers is characterised by the rising production over the last two years.

(b) and (c) A statement is attached.

Statement

So far as the handloom sector is concerned, no suggestions from Government of Maharashtra are reported to have been received. However, in pursuance of the Textile Policy of June, 1985, various benefits have been made available to all handoom weavers including weavers in Maharashtra. Some of the measures taken by Government in this regard include setting up of Contributory Thrift Fund Scheme, Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme, Modernisation of looms and provisions for technological and other inputs for improving productivity and quality and finishing of handloom products, procurement and supply of yarn and other raw materials at reasonable prices, production of mixed and blended fabrics and providing protection to handlooms by reserving certain articles for exclusive production in the handloom sector under "handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production)" Act, 1985.

With regard to powerloom sector, it may be mentioned that the Government of Maharashtra had earlier suggested that ie ban on production of certain varieties cloth by powerloom should be lifted; at specifications given in the reservation ler should be simplified; that differen- concession in excise duty which the erloom sector enjoy prior to the get of 1985-86 should be restored; id that the IDBI modernisation scheme should be extended to the powerloom sector also.

The Advisory Committee regarding reservation of certain fabrics for handlooms was re-constituted and two representatives of the powerloom sector were included in the Advisory Committee. On the basis of the recommendations made by the reconstituted Committee, a revised notification regarding reservation of fabrics for production of handlooms was issued on 5th August, 1986. Government do not propose to disturb the policy of providing protection to handlooms by reserving articles for their exclusive production in the handloom sector. IDBI refinance is now available for modernisation of decentralised powerloom units also.

The present policy provides that the healthy development of the powerloom sector should take place in the context of parity between powerlooms in the organised mill sector and in the unorganised powerloom sector.

Soviet willingness to purchase Indian equipment and chemicals

2687. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Soviet Union is ready to purchase Indian equipment and chemicals for its oil sector; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) and (b) During the Indi-Soviet Joint Commission Meeting held in Moscow in June, 1987, the question of Soviet Union utilising Indian drilling equipment, chemicals and services was discussed. No agreement on this, however, has been finalised.

Dowry deaths in Delhi

2688. SHRI DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what was the total number of dowry deaths during the year 1986-87 in Delhi; and